

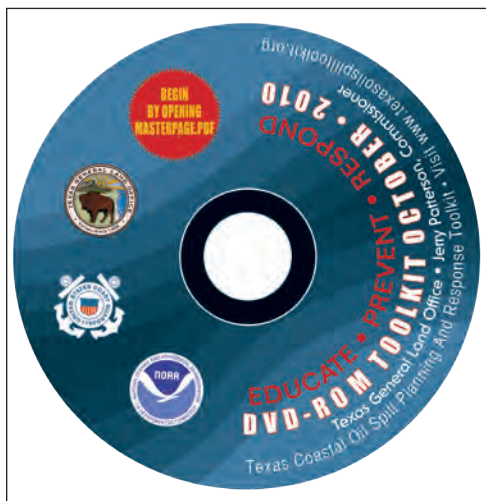


THE RESPONDER

TEXAS GENERAL LAND OFFICE • JERRY PATTERSON, COMMISSIONER
OIL SPILL PREVENTION AND RESPONSE PROGRAM • DECEMBER 2010



Latest Oil Spill Planning and Response Toolkit Now Available



The Texas General Land Office Oil Spill Prevention and Response Program announces the 12th edition of the Texas Coastal Oil Spill Planning and Response Toolkit. The free Toolkit was released at the October 2010 Clean Gulf Oil Spill Conference in Tampa, Fla. Designed to

provide the spill planning and response community with the best available information and resources for coastal oil spill response, the 2010 DVD Toolkit contains: Area Contingency Plans; more than 400 maps covering Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama; Regional Response Team VI documents; ICS forms; software applications; Internet links for oceanographic and meteorological in-

formation; state and federal plans; and many other important spill-related reference documents. The DVD Toolkit is a joint effort between the Land Office, NOAA and U.S. Coast Guard District 8. This year's edition contains many new features and updates including the 2010 ACP updates to the One Gulf Plan and the Geographic Response Plans for Sector Corpus Christi, Sector Houston-Galveston and Sector Mobile as well as new ESI maps for Mississippi. The Toolkit also includes: the updated RRT VI directory, a new U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Coastal Texas Wildlife Refuge Plan, a revised Audubon Society Bolivar Flats Response Plan, a new Protection Strategy for the southeast shoreline of Corpus Christi Bay, a new South Texas Coastal Zone Volunteer Plan, an erratum correcting the MOA for response jurisdictions between the U.S. Coast Guard and the EPA, the Railroad Commission of Texas' SOP, NOAA's "Oil and Sea Turtles: Biology, Planning and Response," a new stakeholder-jurisdiction map for the Texas Coastal Bend area, and 81 revised site-specific response sheets for the Galveston Bay area.

The DVD Toolkit is available free of charge to the spill response community by contacting Dr. Buzz Martin at 512-475-4611 or by writing to buzz.martin@glo.texas.gov. You can also see the Toolkit online at its new Web address at <http://www.texasoilspilltoolkit.org>.

Blaze Unites Responders

In the early morning hours of August 15, Texas General Land Office Oil Spill Program Region 3 Response Officer Steven Buschang was alerted by the U.S. Coast Guard about a fire at the San Patricio County Navigation District Marina in Aransas Pass. The Aransas Pass, Ingleside and Rockport fire departments, aided by fire monitors on a Coast Guard lifeboat, battled the blaze. Boats hanging from lifts burned through their cradles, dropped into the water and drifted across the harbor, consuming a total of 23 vessels, covered boat slips and dockside equipment. Chief Rickie Kilgore of the Aransas Pass Fire Department was acting On-scene Commander and in charge of coordinating the firefighting efforts. By 10:30 a.m., most of the fires had been extinguished and remediation efforts were under way.

San Patricio County Commissioners Jimmy Peer and Hal Parks were on scene working tirelessly to ensure a safe, effective and appropriate response. Underwater Services Commercial Divers removed three fuel tanks from the bottom of the harbor while Miller Environmental Services boomed the areas where the boat wreckage had accumulated to prevent a later release of fuel. Due to extensive damage and suspicious activities noted in the area prior to

the fire, State Fire Marshal Dean Shirley was called to investigate the incident. Regional Liaison Officer Alex Camacho, Texas Parks



Continued on Page 2

This vessel was removed by Underwater Services, Inc.

EDUCATE ♦ PREVENT ♦ RESPOND

Blaze Unites Responders

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and Wildlife Department, and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality also responded to the event.

Due to the intensity of the fire, most of the fuel and oil burned off, leaving little product in the water for remediation. All damaged vessels were removed by Underwater Services and placed in a holding area to await claims by their owners. The San Patricio County Navigation District is working to restore the marina to operational status. The incident exemplifies a coordinated and unified response from multiple jurisdictions.



Miller Environmental boomed the area.

Mexican Shrimp Boats Run High and Dry on SPI



A casualty of Tropical Storm Hermine.

On the morning of September 7, the Texas General Land Office Oil Spill Program and U.S. Coast Guard responded to three shrimp boats that had run aground on South Padre Island (SPI). The Mexican shrimp boats *Astur II*, *Geraldo I* and *Ban Pesca 67* were working in the gulf until Tropical Storm Hermine forced them to seek cover from heavy surf and gale force winds. The sudden formation of the tropical storm not only caught these three vessels off guard, it forced another 62 fishing vessels to seek refuge in the Port of Brownsville.

Strong currents and waves produced by Hermine repositioned both of the navigational buoys north of the entrance to the Brazos-Santiago Pass. The jetties on each side of the channel were

submerged and all three fishing vessels followed the visual path through the navigational buoys and on to the beach. Luckily, they avoided a collision with the SPI jetties. The vessels were physically inspected for damage and possible oil leaks by the Land Office and U.S. Coast Guard, and the Coast Guard also conducted overflights of the area, searching for oil in the water. All crew members were safely removed from the beached shrimping vessels, except for one captain who wished to stay aboard his vessel. Fortunately, none of the fishing vessels sustained structural damage, but a serious spill threat remained due to the 15,000 gallons of fuel they carried. Because of the spill threat to SPI beaches, the Land Office, USCG and responsible party representatives maintained a round-the-clock watch on the vessels.

Javier Vela, the representative for the Mexican fishing vessels, provided the Land Office and Coast Guard with information needed for the salvage plan. Billy Kenon of Marine Salvage was hired, but high surf conditions delayed removal until later that week. Eventually, Marine Salvage prop-washed a channel through the sand bars leading to the beached vessels. A tugboat was then used to pull the fishing vessels into open water, where they were towed to a local shipyard for inspection. Due to a rapid response from the Land Office, the Coast Guard and the salvage contractor, the shrimpers were all safe and accounted for and a major spill was averted. Lesson learned: Never underestimate the power of a tropical storm!

New TABS Responder Buoy

A research and development project of the Texas General Land Office Oil Spill Program was featured in the October 2010 issue of Sea Technology Magazine. Texas A&M University's Geochemical and Environmental Research Group developed an inexpensive buoy that can measure near-surface currents and current profiles at an oil spill site. The roughly 140-pound buoy also measures waves and winds and can be deployed by two people. Known as the TABS Responder, the buoy uses the existing communications infrastructure of the Texas Automated Buoy System and is capable of deployment anywhere in the continental United States in water depths of less than 130 feet.

During spill events, the TABS Responder can supplement the permanent TABS network of buoys or be used alone in bays where no current measurements are available. To learn more about this project, please contact Dr. Buzz Martin by phone at 512-475-4611 or by e-mail at buzz.martin@glo.texas.gov. To view the article in its

entirety, go to http://www.sea-technology.com/features/2010/1010/tabs_responder.php. For more information on the Texas Automated Buoy System see <http://tabs.gerg.tamu.edu/tglo>.



The TABS Responder.

Abandoned Objects Removed from Texas Bays

Across the Texas coast, abandoned and submerged vessels pose a serious threat to both navigation and the environment. Old shrimp boats, barges and other heavy commercial vessels and structures litter the waterways for years, sometimes decades, because local governments don't have the funds to remove them. For many, it's an intractable problem with no easy solution—but not for the Derelict Sunken Vessel Program (DSV) at the Texas General Land Office Oil Spill Prevention and Response Program.



A shrimp boat is removed by Xtreme Recycling and Demolition.

While the Land Office has authority to remove sunken derelict vessels and structures from state waters, it lacks a regular source of funding to pay for removals. This has caused the DSV to become very adept at thinking outside the box.

For example, in Port Isabel, the removal of 35 vessels is nearing completion, one of the biggest such efforts in the state to date. Accomplishing this required cooperation between a private firm—Houston-based Xtreme Recycling and Demolition—and local government bodies, including the Port Isabel-San Benito Navigation District, the city of Port Isabel, the Port of Brownsville, the U.S.

Coast Guard and the Land Office. The cleanup effort removed nearly 30,000 gallons of oily fuel that had been slowly leaking from the ships.

In Chocolate Bay, there were over 20 sunken vessels and derelict structures. Orion, King Fisher and Xtreme Scrap and Recycling LLC joined forces in a private agreement to remove the debris. Xtreme removed 1,500 tons of steel in just over three weeks.

At the Bean Tract near Point Comfort, another 800 tons of steel barges were removed by Xtreme. The cluster of barges had been in place around 40 years, rusting down to rest just beneath the surface of the water. Calhoun Port Authority joined in a private contract with Xtreme to remove these vessels and structures from coastal waters.

The Harbor of Refuge in the Lavaca Bay system was the site of a multiple vessel cleanup. The corner of the harbor, near a commercial fishing dock, was a well-known vessel dumping ground. Ten wooden and one fiberglass fishing vessels had been stripped of identifying marks and either left to sink there or sunk in place. Manuel Rodriguez, a dock manager who was not responsible for the vessels, removed all of them at his own expense.

In another case, three steel-hulled gulf shrimpers and one wooden bay shrimper were removed in a joint effort between private entities and Port Lavaca Harbor Master Jim O'Neil. This effort removed over 140 tons of debris.

Removing vessels and derelict structures, which often contain hazardous materials, leads to improved water quality, re-establishment of coastal habitats, and lower response costs for regulatory agencies. Through all of these projects, Texans have shown that a government solution isn't always the only solution. Everyone involved in cleanup efforts should be commended. Hopefully, others will follow their example of working together to keep our coast clean and safe.

GLO Presents OSPRA Awards for 2009

In order to recognize organizations and individuals that excel in their preparedness and response efforts, the Texas General Land Office Oil Spill Prevention and Response Program presents OSPRA awards annually.

One of the award winners—ExxonMobil—has created a unique school that's tailored to Incident Commanders and Operations Supervisors at the Paradis Training Facility in Louisiana. The University of Spill, as the school is called, provides necessary skills for both new and seasoned spill responders. Integral to the process of training responders are Tommy Tomblin and Brian Hansen. In 2009, they each instructed five classes with a total of about 180 people from the United States and abroad. The Land Office is proud to present both Mr. Hansen and Mr. Tomblin with OSPRA awards for their commitment to the University of Spill and responders worldwide.

Manuel Rodriguez, the manager of Prestige Oyster, a Land Office-certified facility, personally removed 10 sunken vessels from the area surrounding his facility. With no assistance from any state or federal entity, Mr. Rodriguez carefully lifted the wreckage and debris from our coastal waters, making sure there were no spills. He then made sure that all the debris was appropriately disposed of. He took it upon himself to be a good steward of our natural resources and a good neighbor to all who work, fish and play in the

Harbor of Refuge.

Jim O'Neil is the Harbor Master for the city of Port Lavaca. During a recent spill in the Harbor of Refuge, Mr. O'Neil came in during his off hours to provide assistance to responders, providing contact information and permission to place a removed vessel on port property. He has worked with the city of Port Lavaca to remove three steel-hulled gulf shrimpers and one wooden-hulled vessel from Texas coastal waters. It was through his diligent efforts to remove these vessels—and several hundred gallons of waste oil on board them—that more spills were prevented.

The staff of Matagorda County Navigation District One (MCND1), under the leadership of Debbie Morris, has also been chosen as an OSPRA award recipient. Ms. Morris and her staff routinely provide assistance to the Land Office, allowing the agency to do its job at a lower cost by removing marine debris before it can become oiled during a spill response. They man the Oily Bilge Pump-out Station before, during and after business hours in an attempt to keep oil from entering coastal waters. MCND 1 conducts oil spill drills with harbor occupants, helping to educate the owners and employees of facilities within its boundaries.

Congratulations to all 2009 OSPRA winners. Your dedication to making the Texas coast a better place is appreciated.

4th Annual Colonial Waterbird Rookery Island Cleanup

The Texas General Land Office Oil Spill Prevention and Response Program participated in the 4th Annual Colonial Waterbird Rookery Island Cleanup on October 30. About 60 volunteers showed up at the Padre Island Yacht Club to help remove debris from Upper Laguna Madre colonial waterbird nesting islands. Hosting the event were the Land Office, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), the Coastal Bend Bays and Estuaries Program (CBBEP) and Audubon Texas.

The cleanup site included six priority areas that are home to four endangered or protected species and three high priority species identified in the Texas Oil Spill Planning and Response Atlas. The atlas contains maps and associated data used in oil spill planning and response. These data include habitat prioritization, Environ-



GLO Response Officer Steve Buschang talks about boating safety with volunteers.



The USCG and volunteers collect debris from Upper Laguna Madre colonial waterbird nesting islands.

mental Sensitivity Indices, stakeholder information and features such as marinas, boat launch sites and beach access locations.

Volunteers were ferried to the islands on boats supplied by the agencies hosting the event, as well as the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG), the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) and by the owner of a private vessel. The Padre Island Yacht Club provided facilities for loading and unloading vessels and for serving lunch to the volunteers.

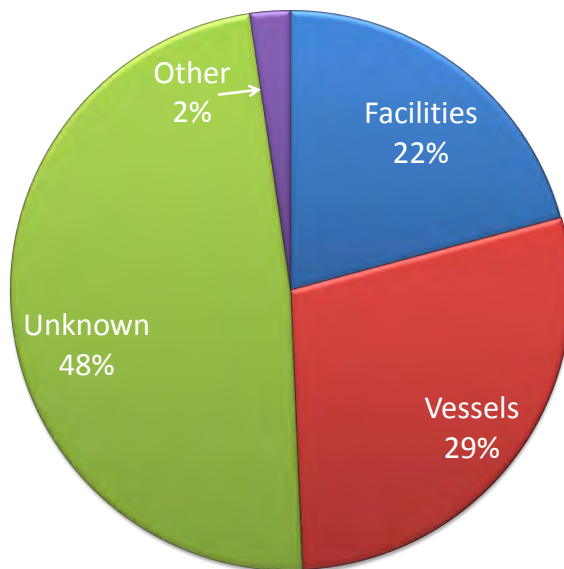
Debris from over 30 spoil islands in the Upper Laguna Madre was collected by volunteers. That was enough to fill a 12-yard dump truck, which was supplied by the city of Corpus Christi Storm Water Department.

Volunteers included students from King High School in Corpus Christi, Coastal Bend College-Kingsville, Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi and the Harte Research Institute. Also participating were the USCG Auxiliary, the Corpus Christi Army Depot, the USFWS, the TPWD, the Land Office, the Coastal Bend Audubon Society, Audubon Texas, CBBEP, the Padre Island Yacht Club and the city of Corpus Christi-Storm Water Department.

The program continues to grow every year thanks to volunteers willing to get their hands dirty for a good cause. In addition to eliminating trash, the event helps educate citizens about thoughtful trash disposal, oil recycling, and the connection of storm water runoff to the eventual fate of trash and oil in the bays. If you are interested in attending next year's cleanup event, please contact Robyn Cobb of the USFWS at 361-994-9005 or David Newstead of the CBBEP at 361-885-6203. The most current version of the Upper and Lower Coast Atlas can be found on the 2010 Oil Spill Planning and Response Toolkit at <http://www.texasoilspilltoolkit.org>.

FY 2010 By the Numbers

Percentage of Spills by Source



Number of Reported Oil Spills

947

Three Largest Oil Spills by Volume

"Eagle Otome" January 23, 2010
Sabine-Neches Ship Channel—396,962 gallons
"Chemical Supplier" September 25, 2009
Houston Ship Channel—10,430 gallons
"J.R. Nichols" February 10, 2010
Houston Ship Channel—10,000 gallons

Number of Certified Facilities

605

Number of Vessel Companies Registered with GLO

2,401

Site Specific Response Planning

One of the responsibilities of the Texas General Land Office Oil Spill Prevention and Response Program is to protect sensitive areas in the event of an oil spill. One way the agency does this is through site-specific response plans for pre-identified sensitive areas. Use of the Incident Command System and approved contingency forms allows for easy incorporation into the Area Contingency Plans (ACP) and creates a user-friendly end product.

These plans include information such as shoreline types, vegetation coverage, species information and possible booming strategies. In some plans, alternative cleanup techniques and impact prevention strategies are addressed. Development of these plans relies on local area knowledge and includes coordination with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, U.S. Coast Guard and other Local Area Committee members.

The ACPs are part of the National Oil and Hazardous Substances Contingency Plan (NCP). Both the Clean Water Act and Oil Pollution Act of 1990 established greater control through the NCP. The goal is to “provide the organizational structure and procedures for preparing for and responding to discharges of oil and releases of hazardous substances, pollutants, and contaminants.”

In Texas, ACPs were developed for each Captain of the Port Zone. Each year, Local Area Committees review their ACPs and



Marsh habitat to be protected by site specific response planning.

update them as needed. Area Committees are responsible for working with state and local officials to pre-plan for joint response efforts in order to expedite decisions during an actual response. The Land Office and Local Area Committees work diligently to anticipate, plan and protect the natural resources of Texas.

To become part of your Local Area Committee and help make a difference, contact the nearest office of the Texas General Land Office. Contact information for the agency's various facilities can be found on page 6.

The Importance of Media Relations

The first press conference after a major oil spill gets under way. Stepping up to the podium, the responsible party's spokesperson looks uncomfortable, perhaps a little frightened. A barrage of questions erupts from reporters. The unprepared spokesperson is unable to give a clear picture of what happened, how much was spilled, or what's being done. Knowledge of the company's response plan is lacking and pointed questions are asked about public safety, environmental damage and the company's inability to prevent the disaster. With video rolling, cameras flashing and continued questioning, the representative quickly loses credibility and fails in media relations.

Obviously, talking to the media can have its challenges; a multitude of factors can apply to any given event. Many times the initial media contact can be less than informative if the event has just occurred and all the details are not yet known. When reporting an oil spill event, the media can be fair and positive, or unduly negative. The best media relations advice is to keep journalists informed. Companies projecting an image of having things under control and actively disseminating accurate and up-to-date information, can better manage the event and minimize damage to their reputations.

Being unprepared in today's world is a disaster waiting to happen. When a spill event occurs, response should be immediate, as should your ability to present a clear and concise statement to the media. The first contact is the most important and should express concern and sympathy, followed by as much detail as is known. First impressions are lasting. Lack of planning, half truths, or a poorly communicated image can have possible long-term legal and ethical ramifications for your company.

Regardless of whether you've developed a very simple plan, or have an exceedingly detailed one, training is the key to representing your company well. A number of media-related training programs are available, and though they may differ in some respects, all agree that being prepared to deal with the media is your chief asset. Oil spill responders can especially benefit from training in the Joint Information System, where the responsibilities of a Public Information Officer include running a Joint Information Center.

The time to improve your media relations is long before an event occurs. Maintaining an up-to-date Emergency Response or Crisis Communications Plan is a step in the right direction.

Upcoming Events

Information Transfer Meetings

Dates and locations for the 2011 Information Transfer Meetings will be announced in January on the Land Office website (www.glo.texas.gov).

OSPRA Award Nominations

A call for OSPRA nominations for calendar year 2010 will be announced in January. Take a minute to thank someone for his or her outstanding service to the oil spill community. Visit the Land Office website for more information.

20th Annual Clean Gulf Conference Shatters Records



Gulf Coast states representatives during annual Clean Gulf Conference in Tampa Bay, Fla. L to R: Eric Dear, Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality; Phil Woods, Alabama Department of Environmental Management; Phil Wieczynski, Florida Department of Environmental Protection; Roland Guidry, Louisiana Oil Spill Coordinator's Office and Greg Pollock, Texas General Land Office.

The 20th annual Clean Gulf Conference was held from October 19-20 at the Tampa Bay Convention Center in Florida. The conference has come a long way since the first one, held in 1991 at Palmer Auditorium in Austin. Created by the Texas General Land Office Oil Spill Prevention and Response Program, Clean Gulf is the premiere oil spill, hazmat and emergency response conference in the United States.

This year's event attracted almost 2,700 attendees and featured 246 exhibitors. The primary focus was a thorough review of the Deep Water Horizon Incident. An excellent lineup of speakers included U.S. Coast Guard Rear Admiral Mary E. Landry, Chief Operating Officer BP Gulf Coast Restoration Organization Michael J. Utsler, and Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation, and Enforcement (BOEMRE) Deputy Director Walter D. Cruickshank, along with representatives of the five gulf states.

Clean Gulf 2011 is scheduled for November 30 through December 1 at the Henry B. Gonzales Convention Center in San Antonio. This event once again will offer up the latest developments on oil spill regulatory initiatives, case studies, and an outstanding array of product vendors. For more information contact GLO Outreach and Education Coordinator Debbie Saenz at debbie.saenz@glo.texas.gov or by phone at 512-475-1466, or Event Planner Kayla Pelt at kayla@tradefair.org or by phone at 713-343-1869.

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Brownsville, Texas
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956-504-1417

Port Lavaca

414 Travis Street
Port Lavaca, Texas
77979-2351
361-552-8081

Report oil spills
1-800-832-8224
24 hours

The Responder is published by the Texas General Land Office. Questions and comments may be submitted to Maren Harding via e-mail at maren.harding@glo.texas.gov or by phone at 281-470-6597.



Debbie Saenz proudly displays the Clean Gulf 2010 Best Booth award.

State's Oldest Agency Unveils Cutting-Edge Website www.glo.texas.gov

On October 1, 2010, the Texas General Land Office unveiled a website—www.glo.texas.gov—with a sleek, corporate feel that reflects the professional evolution of the state's oldest agency.

The website redesign is the first in more than 15 years for the Land Office. "This website represents a whole new approach to how the Land Office interacts with Texans and our business customers," said Texas Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson. "This redesign shifts the website away from bureaucracy and jargon to present the agency in a much more organized, easy to use way."

As of October 1, all visitors to the old URL (glo.state.tx.us) will be redirected to the new URL (glo.texas.gov).